

# **APPENDICES**

## **Best Practices in Electronic Records Management A Survey and Report on Federal Government Agencies' Recordkeeping Practices**

**Center for Information Policy  
University of Maryland  
November 2005**

## **APPENDIX A**

*Electronic Records Management Best Practices Survey*

## University of Maryland Electronic Records Management Best Practices Survey

### Survey Description:

The following survey on electronic recordkeeping practices is administered by the Electronic Records Management Research Team at the University of Maryland's Center for Information Policy in coordination with the National Archives and Records Administration.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about current and best practices in electronic records management. The responses to this survey will be used to ascertain the extent to which Federal government offices, state government offices, and private sector businesses have adopted electronic recordkeeping systems and how the management of electronic records is incorporated with traditional records management strategies. The survey data combined with current research at the Center for Information Policy will identify best solutions for managing electronic records.

**Definitions: (NOTE: These definitions will not be routinely presented during live interviews, but will be used only to respond to specific questions).**

**Clinger-Cohen Act (CCA)** - more formally known as the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996...its focus is IT procurement and utilization...directs agency heads to utilize performance-and results- based management practices for their IT activities and to prepare and annual report to the Congress concerning progress in achieving such goals...also...fyi...created the position of CIO within each federal agency...also note that the CIA has exceptions for national security systems.

**Corporate file** – A file is considered “corporate” when it is available to all staff members in an office or offices who need it. Corporate files in paper format are maintained in a physical location accessible to relevant staff. Corporate files in electronic format are maintained on a computer server accessible to relevant staff.

**Disposition Schedule** - A document that identifies and describes an organization's records, usually at the series level, provides instructions for the disposition of records throughout their lifecycle. Also called a **disposal schedule, records schedule, records retention schedule,** and **transfer schedule**. Retention schedules may also include instructions for the disposition of documents and other materials that are not official records.

**Document Management System** – Tracks and stores documents. The term is used to distinguish among imaging and records management systems that specialize in paper capture and records respectively. Document management systems commonly provide check-in, check-out, storage and retrieval of electronic documents. Physical paper document management systems store a scanned image of a document, and in some systems, text about the document. Electronic document management systems (EDMS) manage electronic records produced by individuals using their desktop computers (e.g., word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, projects, e-mail). Stores information about the records and the actual physical records and typically includes a workflow model for certifying and electronically signing documents. EDMS provides only primitive records retention capabilities.

**DoD 5015.2 Certified** – a records management application certified by the JITC because it meets the mandatory baseline functional requirements set forth by the Department of Defense and endorsed by NARA.

**Electronic Record** - any information that is recorded in a form that only a computer can process and that satisfies the definition a record.

**Electronic Recordkeeping System/Application** - An electronic system in which records are collected, organized, and categorized to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, and disposition. The system should meet an agency's recordkeeping needs.

**Federal Manager's Financial Accountability Act (FMFIA)** - Requires agency heads to submit annually, an Integrity Act Report providing reasonable assurance that the Agency's policies, procedures and guidance are adequate to support the achievement of the agency's intended mission, goals and objectives.

**File Plan** - A classification scheme describing different types of files maintained in an office, how they are identified, where they should be stored, how they should be indexed for retrieval, and a reference to the approved disposition for each file.

**Flexible Scheduling** – Provides for concrete disposition instructions that may be applied to groupings of information and/or categories of temporary records (in other words, instructions for agencies to develop schedules for disposable program records at as high a level of aggregation as would meet their business needs). Flexibility is in defining record groupings. Flexible scheduling relates to the **Big Bucket** approach, which refers to the application of appraisal criteria to multiple, similar, or related groupings of information across one or multiple agencies to establish a uniform retention period.

**Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA, or "The Results Act")**, P.L. 103-62 - Ties performance to the budget and covers everything not just IT...the GPRA was intended to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of government programs by requiring agencies to focus on results rather than traditional concerns such as staffing and activity levels. Under the GRA, agencies must set goals, measure performance, and report on their accomplishments...specifically required are Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans and Annual Program Performance Reports. In doing so, agencies need to be able to articulate their mission, identify goals, identify activities that will achieve those goals, identify performance measures, and identify how that measurement information will be used to make improvements.

**ISO 15489** - An international standard that established principles to ensure that adequate records are created, captured, and managed, and guidelines for their implementation.

**Program Worker** – A staff member carrying out the office's mission.

**Record** - All books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any public or private institution in pursuance of its legal obligations or in connection with the transaction of its proper business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that institution or its legitimate successor as evidence its organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities or because of the informational value of the data in them.

**Records Liaison** – A staff member who organizes and maintains the office’s records.

**Targeted Assistance** – Means that NARA works together with individual agencies to solve specific records management problems. Since 1999, NARA has initiated 344 projects, completed 238 projects, and assisted 88 unique agencies. Through these partnerships, they have inventoried and scheduled at-risk records, trained agency personnel in records management, and assisted in the development of records management systems.

**Task Management System** – Software designed to help agency’s break down, assign, and monitor specific tasks that need to be completed within a set timeframe. The system may alert personnel when new tasks are assigned to them, give real-time reports on status, or track trends and completion dates.

**Web Content Schedule** - In January 2005, NARA issued guidance on managing web records. NARA recommends that agencies conduct a risk analysis in order to establish appropriate levels of records management controls over web sites. Based on this analysis, agencies should develop records schedules for web content records that document the information on the site itself. A web schedule should also include web site management and operations records, which provide the site’s context and structure.

**Information provided by NARA or researched by ERM team before the site visits: (These questions will NOT be asked during the interview or included in the web survey. In the web survey these questions will be replaced by generic classification questions)**

1. What is the **title** and **organization code** of the office?
2. What is the name of the records management (or other) **contact person** for this office? Was this person present during the interview?
3. What is the office’s **physical location**?
4. What is the primary **function** of the office?
5. Does the agency maintain a **Federal public web site**?

Yes	
If yes, did NARA include the agency on its <i>Active Agency Domains</i> list as a target for their harvest of Federal agency public web sites, as they exist on or before January 20, 2005?	
No	
Not sure	

**Questions to be asked during the site visits:**

**Function of office:**

- 6. What **work** does the office perform?
- 7. What is (are) the **functional title(s) of the program workers** in the office (e.g., action officer, management analyst, scientist, engineer)?

**Organization of office:**

- 8. What offices are above this office in the **agency hierarchy**?
- 9. How is this office **organized internally** (i.e., is it subdivided into branches or other subunits)?
- 10. Approximately how many **staff members** are in the office?
- 11. How many **records liaison** staff does the office have?

**Nature of records** created and received by the office (this survey is primarily concerned with program records and not administrative housekeeping records):

- 12. What are the major **titles of records series** being maintained?
- 13. Approximately what is the **date span** of records in the office? (How far do they go back?)
- 14. Which records does the office consider the **most important**?
- 15. Which records does the office **send to other offices**, either inside or outside of the agency (e.g., the office submits quarterly activity reports to the Office of the Secretary)?

**Agency/Office Records Management Program**

16. Please describe the **records management program** in this office (Select all that apply):

	YES	NO
Is there a written records management policy?		
Is there a component of the written records management policy that addresses electronic records?		
Does the records management program comply with ISO 15489?		
Do program workers receive scheduled training with respect to their responsibilities for records management?		
Does the records management staff includes an IT expert?		
Is there is a formal system for records hold orders relative to claims or litigation?		
Are <b>electronic</b> records included in a formal system for records hold order relative to claims or litigation?		
Is there a disaster recovery plan for vital records?		
Are there disposition and retention schedules?		
Are records transferred to storage facilities for inactive storage?		
Are permanent records identified and preserved or transferred to an archive?		

17. Has the records liaison or any program worker received any records management **training or services from NARA**?

If yes, **how useful** was it to you in helping in your electronic records management efforts?

Useful in day-to-day operational records keeping	
Useful in planning intermediate records-keeping planning (1-2 years)	
Useful in long-term planning efforts (3-5 years)	
None of the above, please explain.	

18. Has your organization received any **“targeted assistance”** from NARA on the design and/or implementation electronic record management projects?

If yes, in **what form**?

Training	
Applications Software recommendation	
Compliance to NARA standards	
Other (please describe)	

If yes, approximately **how many** projects? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list projects?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary)

19. What **accountability and enforcement mechanisms** are in place for records management (Select all that apply):

	YES	NO	Considering in future?
The records manager conducts scheduled evaluations of program workers’ compliance with records management policies and procedures			
Program workers are given a certificate or other form of reward when they receive an excellent evaluation			
The Inspector General conducts scheduled audits of records management policies and procedures			
None of the above. Please explain:			

20. Is there a clear connection between the records management program and the overall mission of the agency?

21. If there is a connection between the records management program and the agency mission, please describe the **degree to which the program is linked** with the overall goals. (Select all that apply)

	YES	NO
The records management program is included in the annual budget		
The records manager is a high-ranking official		
The records manager is part of IT development teams		
Records management contributes to the annual reporting required by the Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act of 1982		
Records management contributes to the annual reporting required by the Government Performance Results Act of 1993		
Records management contributes to the annual reporting required by the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996		

**How are Records Managed** in the office:

22. Does the office have a **file plan**?

<b>Yes</b>	YES	NO
Is there a <b>copy of the file plan</b> that we could see?		
For each records series, does the plan reference the relevant item number in the agency records <b>disposition manual</b> ?		
<b>No</b>		
Can the office tell us which approved items in the <b>disposition schedule</b> apply to the office's records?		

23. Does the office use NARA's **General Records Schedules**; has the office **developed its own records schedule**; or some **combination of both**?

	YES	NO
The office uses <b>NARA's</b> general records schedules for all of its records.		
The office <b>develops its own</b> records schedules for all records created in the office.		
The office <b>uses a combination</b> of NARA's general records schedules and individual records schedules developed by the office for unique or high-priority records.		

24. Does the office use **Flexible Scheduling**?

Never heard of it	Heard of it, but not implemented	Considering implementation	Already implemented

**Maintenance of paper and electronic records:**

25. How are records **maintained**?

Exclusively in paper format	
Exclusively in electronic format	
Some paper and some electronic	

26. Are **paper records copied** to another medium (digital, microform, etc.)?

Yes	What medium?
	Does your office retain the paper originals? ___ YES ___ NO
	If <b>yes</b> , are such records <b>integrated</b> with “born-digital” records in an electronic recordkeeping system? ___ YES ___ NO
	What <b>disposition</b> (or retention) actions are taken for the digitized records?
No	
Some of the time	
I don’t know	

27. Are **electronic records copied** to another medium?

Yes	What medium?
	Does your office retain the electronic originals?
No	
Some of the time	
I don’t know	

28. For paper or electronic records that are copied to another medium, please explain **why originals are retained** or **why they are not retained**.

29. When the office creates **duplicates** of a given electronic record, how does the office designate which copy is the recordkeeping copy?

30. Does the office maintain any **databases** that serve as tracking systems for files?

Yes	
Are there <b>disposition instructions</b> for these databases (or are these databases included in your standard disposition schedule)?	
No	

31. Where are records **filed**? Please select all that apply:

	YES	NO
Corporate filing cabinets		
Individual employees' filing cabinets		
Electronic Recordkeeping System (e.g.,: IBM Electronic Records Management Solution)		
Electronic Document Management System (e.g.,: DOCS Open)		
Shared Drive		
Task Management System (e.g.,: Microsoft Outlook Task Manager)		
Individual employees' hard drive		
Other (please explain)		

32. Does the office retire any records to **off-site storage facilities** (select all that apply):

	Paper records	Electronic records
The office retires records to the Washington National Records Center		
The office retires records to other Federal Records Centers		
The office retires records to an agency-controlled records storage facility (GOGO, GOCO, or COCO-exclusive agency use)		
The office retires records to a private records storage facility (i.e.: Iron Mountain)		
The office does not retire any records to off-site storage facilities		

### Electronic Recordkeeping Systems

33. For records that are maintained and **filed electronically**:

- a. What is the electronic system (**product name**) that is being used? (e.g. Hummingbird, Tumbleweed, Documentum, etc.)
- b. Is the electronic system **DoD 5015.2 certified**?
- c. **Why did the office choose** this system: (please select all that apply)

	YES	NO
Cost benefit		
Time savings benefit		
Required by top management officials		
Modernization		
The rest of the agency uses it		
Easy to use and learn		
Other (please describe)		

34. Are any records maintained in **corporate files**?

Yes	No
Please <b>list the types</b> of records (paper or electronic)	

35. For records maintained in a **corporate file**:

a. **Who files** the records? (select all that apply)

	Records in <b>paper</b> format	Records in <b>electronic</b> format
<b>Program workers who create the records</b>		
<b>Records liaison</b>		
A Secretary		

b. **How** are records filed? (select all that apply)

	Records in <b>paper</b> format	Records in <b>electronic</b> format
Filed in accordance with a <b>file plan linked to the agency's disposition schedule</b>		
Filed in accordance with the agency's <b>disposition schedule</b>		
Not filed according to a file plan or disposition schedule		

36. For records maintained in **electronic format** in a corporate file:

a. **Who has access** to the system? (select all that apply)

All employees	
Top management officials	
Records liaison	
Other (please describe)	

b. **How does staff access** the records in the system?

	YES	NO
Via an <b>icon</b> on their desktop		
Via an <b>intranet</b>		
Via the <b>internet</b>		
Other (please describe)		

c. **How is access to the system regulated?**

	YES	NO
The system is <b>open to all users</b> who know about it		
The system is available through <b>designated workstations</b>		
Authorized users are assigned an <b>ID and password</b>		
How are access <b>privileges removed</b> from the system?		
Other (please describe)		

d. **In what format** are they able to access records in the system?

Read only format	
Read and write format	

e. In general, how does staff **find records** in the electronic corporate file?

	YES	NO
Through <b>search function</b> in the electronic system		
By <b>browsing</b> through a list of available files/folders		
Through <b>special request</b> via a different department		
Other (please describe)		

Please explain **how effective** this method is for finding records:

Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not at all effective

f. Is the electronic system **migrated** to new software and hardware as necessary?

If **yes**, how often? (select one)

Every 6 months	Once per year	Every 2-3 years	Every 4-5 years	More often than once every 5 years

g. Please describe procedures used to store **confidential, privileged, or other restricted** access records. (**select only one**):

<b>All</b> records are stored regardless of sensitivity in general storage	
<b>Some</b> sensitive records are prohibited from being stored electronically	
Sensitive records are stored <b>separate</b> from general records	

- h. Describe the disposition practices for **temporary electronic records** at your agency (select all that apply):

	YES	NO
<b>HOW</b>		
Flagged for deletion before they are destroyed		
Deleted according to a disposition schedule		
Deleted ad hoc		
<b>WHO</b>		
Deleted manually by individual program workers		
Deleted manually by the records liaison		
Deleted automatically by the electronic system		
Other (please describe)		

- i. A record is considered “**destroyed**” when the following has occurred: (select all that apply)

	YES	NO
When the “delete” button has been pushed		
When the media has been overwritten.		
When the media has been physically destroyed		
When backups have been overwritten.		
When an audit log is checked and all copies have been destroyed		
Other (please describe)		

- j. Describe the practices for **permanent electronic records** at your agency: (select all that apply):

	YES	NO
Permanent records are <b>flagged for transfer</b> to the National Archives		
Permanent records are <b>maintained with temporary records</b> until they are transferred for archiving		
Permanent records are <b>maintained separate from temporary records</b> prior to archiving		

37. Are recordkeeping copies of some records maintained at program workers’ desks or personal computers?

- If so, may we view these records?
- Does the program worker follow the file plan or disposition schedule to manage these records?
- If a program worker leaves the office what is done with his or her records?

Records are collected from the worker’s workspace by copying them from the worker’s computer or physically removing the paper files and then incorporated into the agency’s records management program.	
Records are boxed up or transferred to backup media and left indefinitely stored until needed.	
Other (please describe)	

**Management of e-mail records: (The previous group of questions applied to all forms of electronic records. This group of questions applies only to e-mail.)**

38. Please describe the **policy that determines** which e-mail are records.

<i>(select all that apply)</i>	YES	NO
The office policy generally follows NARA's proposed new e-mail regulation that states transitory e-mail dealing with routine matters does not have to be filed in a recordkeeping system		
Official agency policy delegates what e-mail messages are records. (Please explain the policy)		
E-mail record status is determined on a case-by-case basis. (Please explain the criteria used)		
Other (please describe)		

39. **Who decides** which e-mail is a record and which e-mail is not a record?

Program workers Please explain <b>criteria</b> used	Records liaisons Please explain <b>criteria</b> used	Other (please describe)

40. In what **format** are e-mail records maintained?

<b>Electronically</b>	<b>Paper</b>
E-mail records are maintained in an <b>native e-mail system</b> (i.e.: Microsoft Outlook)	Paper copies of e-mails are <b>maintained according to the file plan</b> or disposition/retention schedule
E-mail records are maintained in an electronic <b>Document Management System</b>  Is the DMS <b>DoD 5015.2</b> certified?	Paper copies of e-mails are <b>maintained by the employees</b> who print them to paper and <b>do not follow a plan</b>
E-mail records are maintained in an <b>Electronic Recordkeeping System (ERK)</b>	
E-mail records are maintained in <b>another electronic format</b> (e.g., Word)	

41. **Where** are your e-mail records maintained?

Program worker's desks	
Personal computers	
File Management Systems on a shared server	
Commercial Document Management System	
Other (please specify)	

42. **In actual practice**, how often are **e-mails deleted**?

Automatically after <b>sixty days</b> (unless retained by individual employee's action)	
Automatically after <b>ninety days</b> (unless retained by individual employee's action)	
Automatically after a <b>year</b> (unless retained by individual employee's action)	
E-mails are <b>deleted on an individual basis</b> as determined by <b>disposition schedules</b>	
<b>All e-mails are saved</b>	
I don't know	
Other (please specify)	

43. If **e-mails** are maintained by program workers, what happens to the e-mail records when the program worker **leaves** the office?

Transferred to new employee	
Transferred to immediate supervisor	
Saved on a shared server file	
Deleted	
Other (Please describe)	

**Web Content Management**

44. How is web content managed?

	Yes	No	I don't know
The office maintains a <b>Federal public web</b> site?			
The agency schedules its <b>web content records</b> as required by NARA			

**Future of Records Management and Concluding Remarks:**

45. Does the office know whom to **contact** or how to **access** information regarding any of NARA's **guidelines** for electronic records management (e.g., imaged files; electronic signatures; transfer of formats of permanent electronic records to National Archives; NARA endorsement of DoD 5015.2-STD)?

46. If the office **has implemented an electronic recordkeeping system** for any or all of their files, what **problems** did the office encounter when the system was introduced?

Problems encountered for <b>custom built</b> and certified systems:	Problems encountered for turnkey or <b>COTS</b> (Commercial off the Shelf) products:

47. If the office has **not implemented an electronic recordkeeping system** for any or all of their files, what is the **main reason** why they have not?

	YES	NO
Lack of Financial Resources		
Lack of Expertise		
Deemed unnecessary for day to day operations of the agency		
Other (please specify)		

48. What types of **barriers** would you anticipate within your office when implementing an ERK system? (For example, employee resistance)?

49. What types of **advantages** would you anticipate within your office when implementing an ERK system? (For example, better organized)?

50. Is the office **planning to implement an electronic recordkeeping system** for any or all of their files in the near future?

51. **If yes, what systems/vendors are you** is the office considering and for what files?

System/vendor name	Files?

52. How often has the recordkeeping officer (or you) attended **conferences** focusing on best practices in electronic records management in the last 2 years? (Please list names of conferences attended, if any)

0-2 times	3-4 times	5 or more times

Conference Names:

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53. Do you **communicate regularly** with records management peers in different agencies?

Yes	
If yes, how? (Listserves, meetings, roundtable, etc)	
No	

54. Please explain how **communication across agencies** may be helpful or why it may be a hindrance to your records management program.

Helpful	Hindrance

55. Are there any questions that you feel were not covered in this survey or is there anything else you would like to add?

## **APPENDIX B**

### *Introduction Letter*

February, 2005

Dear Survey Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Electronic Records Management Best Practices Survey developed by the Center for Information Policy at the University of Maryland. This research is sponsored by the Life Cycle Management Division of the National Archives and Records Administration and aims to gather information about current electronic recordkeeping practices in the public and private sector in order to identify best practices in electronic records management.

The National Archives and Records Administration named your agency as one of thirty-three federal agencies that will take part in onsite interviews lasting approximately 90 minutes, not exceeding 120 minutes, and focusing on agencies' records management policies and practices. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. All of your responses will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and presented only in aggregate form, without subjects' names or organizations (unless the subject opts to make this information available). Access to the individual surveys will be limited to the Center for Information Policy staff who are administering the survey.

The purpose of this survey is to ascertain the extent to which federal government offices have adopted electronic recordkeeping systems and how the management of electronic records is incorporated with traditional records management strategies. The scope of this project includes an examination of how current policies influence day-to-day operations. For this reason, Center for Information Policy staff may ask to view your recordkeeping systems, written policies or file plans, or any other physical component of your records management program. This part of the survey is also voluntary but will contribute to the quality of our findings. You may choose to prepare some of your responses in advance and ensure that requested materials are available during the interview by reviewing the enclosed list of sample questions. The interview responses, combined with current research at the Center for Information Policy, will identify solutions that address current problems encountered by many public and private organizations when managing their electronic records.

We understand that you are busy and that your time is valuable. We greatly appreciate your cooperation and look forward to speaking with you about your agency's approaches to records management. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the Electronic Records Management Research Team at ([nara2cip@umd.edu](mailto:nara2cip@umd.edu)).

Sincerely yours,

Lee Strickland, J.D.  
Director, Center for Information Policy

## **APPENDIX C**

*Informed Consent Form*

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**Project Title** CIP/NARA Project: Electronic Records Management Best Practices Survey

**Statement of Age of Subject** I state that I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Prof. Lee Strickland at the Center for Information Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park.

**Purpose** The purpose of this research is to gather information about current electronic recordkeeping practices and identify best-practice solutions. This project is being conducted pursuant to contract number NAMA-04-M-0059, issued by the National Archives and Records Administration.

**Procedure** The procedure consists of a 60-90 minute interview, during which I will be asked questions about the database aggregation/inference problems. Sample questions are attached.

**Confidentiality** All information collected in this study is confidential to the extent permitted by law. I understand that the data I provide will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation. Neither my name nor the name of my organization will be used, unless I specifically so authorize.

**Recording** I \_\_\_ **DO**/ \_\_\_ **DO NOT** grant my permission for this interview to be tape-recorded. Tapes of recorded interviews will be stored in a secure location, labeled only with an identification number, and accessed only by the student investigators and the PI. The tapes will be destroyed at the completion of the project, in May 2005.  
If granting permission for tape-recording, I \_\_\_ **DO**/ \_\_\_ **DO NOT** wish to review the transcript of the interview for accuracy.

**Risks and Benefits** There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. My organization may benefit from the results of the research into the inference and aggregation problems as well as by our proposed solutions, but this research is not designed to benefit me personally

**Voluntary, Freedom to Discontinue, Ask Questions** Participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I am free to ask questions or discontinue my participation at any time and without penalty.

**Contact Information of Investigators** *Co-principal Investigators*  
Stephen Hannestad (telephone) 301-405-4580 (email) shannest@umd.edu Lee Strickland J.D. (telephone) 301-405-1741 (email) lee.s.strickland@att.net  
*Student Investigators*  
Juliet Anderson, Megan Smith (email) nara2cip@umd.edu (telephone) 301-405-3572

**Contact Information of Institutional Review Board** If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:  
Institutional Review Board Office  
University of Maryland; College Park, Maryland, 20742  
(email) irb@deans.umd.edu (telephone) 301-405-4212

**Name of Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX D**

*Opt-In Form*

**OPT-IN FORM**

**Electronic Records Management Best Practices Survey**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to release

*(initial as many as apply)*

\_\_\_ my name

\_\_\_ the name of my organization/place of employment

for use by the Center for Information Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park, in conjunction with the information I provide in the course of its study of the database aggregation and inference problems.

This release applies to information obtained both through the initial interview and in any follow-up sessions, which will occur no later than May 30, 2005.

I understand that the information thus released may appear in reports issued by the Center for Information Policy, which may be shared with third parties or published, and I will hold the Center of Information Policy, its staff, and any other associated persons free of liability for the release of this information.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX E**

*Web Survey Report*

# **Web-Based Survey of Best Practices in Electronic Records Management**



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master of Information Management Team Experience  
(INFM736: Information Management Team Experience)

Prepared by:

Maria Chkeri  
Rachelle McCord  
Lin Ma  
Edward Lari

Submitted to:

The Center for Information Policy (CIP)  
University of Maryland  
College Park, Maryland  
June 20, 2005

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

The rapid proliferation of information and telecommunication technologies has accelerated the replacement of manual and paper-based records with electronic records in government and the private sector. Effectively managing these records to support organizations requires a formalization of control over electronic records already existing in departments and agencies, as well as planning for those that will be generated by new services. Unfortunately, records management programs and practices have not kept up with current technological developments nor has there been a concerted effort to standardize Electronic Records Management (ERM) programs. The objective of this web-based survey, as part of a larger study in ERM by the Center for Information Policy (CIP) at the University of Maryland is to gauge the current state of ERM in both public and private sector organizations.

The survey was announced on the records management and archives listservs and individual invitations were sent to about 70 records managers. Records and information management professionals received a survey of 31 questions via a web-based survey tool. The SurveyMonkey.com-powered survey was open for 30 days, after which the results from 119 respondents were collected and analyzed. The responses to this web-based survey do not represent a statistical sample of the records management profession. As all of the respondents “self-selected” to participate in the survey, it is safe to assume that those that did respond were among the most interested segment of the general population, and are thus not representative.

The analysis of the results produced the following major findings:

- **Agency/Office Records Management Programs:** The vast majority (82%) of organizations have written record management policies in place for paper records and 61% of them have such policies for electronic records. In addition, 54% indicated that their offices have a disaster recovery plan, 80% said they have disposition and records retention schedules, and 81% have procedures in place to transfer records to storage facilities.

Unfortunately, records management is still rarely treated or perceived as an important function in organizations. Despite an indication that their organizations provide budgets for records management, 75% of the respondents responded that their organization does not have a high-ranking official responsible for records management and 59% reported no link between records management and the overall goals of their organization.

- **Maintenance of Paper and Electronic Records:** Organizations are diligent in providing backup and storage systems. Sixty-four percent of the respondents indicated that their organizations have made accommodations for permanent storage of both paper and electronic records. In addition, 84% of organizations periodically backup their electronic record systems to on- or off-site facilities.
- **E-mail Records:** Eighty-eight percent of the respondents consider e-mails to be records. Perhaps recent events such as the Enron and Arthur Anderson scandals influenced how the records management community perceives e-mail. Despite this awareness, there

seems to be no clear definition of which e-mails are records and who makes this distinction. For example, 60% of the respondents answered that the status of e-mails as record material is determined on a case-by-case basis and only 46% said that there are official agency/organizational policies on which they can base decisions.

- **The Future of Electronic Records Management:** Thirty-four percent of organizations have or are in the process of implementing an Electronic Recordkeeping System (ERK). Most organizations, 66%, had not implemented some form of ERK. Fifty-seven percent of these organizations pointed to lack of financial resources as the major obstacle to implementation, not a lack of recognition of the value provided by ERKs.

In conclusion, the highlights of the survey results point to a pattern in records management. There is high recognition among records management professionals of the importance of considering e-mails as records. In addition, organizations have been slow to implement ERKs and adopt best practices to ensure the adequate storage of electronic records. This is because ERM is still relegated to the staff and administrative levels of most organizations; this is evidenced by the lack of high-ranking records management officials, linkage of records management to overall goals of organizations, and financial resources available implement ERKs.

## **2.0 Introduction**

Effective records management, Electronics Records Management (ERM) in the era of rapid information and communications technology proliferation, is a major indicator of how effectively an organization and its employees conduct business, how accountable it can be to its stakeholders, and how well it can deliver services to the community. This is increasingly becoming paramount in different areas of organizational activities including operational, strategic, and statutory conduct of business. Unfortunately, records management does not receive the attention and investment typically accorded to other areas of business such as Information Technology. In contrast, organizations tend to value and place emphasis on the tightly controlled environment required in data processing systems, where budgets may include significant sums of money for transactional systems such as database management systems. Records management is often relegated to clerical work without the leadership, strategy, or tools to adequately meet organizational goals.

In cases where organizations make concrete efforts to implement adequate electronic records management practices, they are often confronted with the prospect of not knowing exactly how to approach such an undertaking. This lack of basic knowledge on the current state of electronic records management policies, procedures, and tools can prolong the process of implementation, leading to cost overruns in software and consulting fees.

The primary purpose of this survey is to acquire empirical data about current best practices in electronic records management programs in public and private sector organizations. The survey provides an overall picture and gauges the extent to which public and private sector organizations are implementing electronic records management policies.

This report includes a discussion of each survey question, an explanation of the reasons for asking the question, an examination of results collected, and an analysis of what the results present about records management practices in public and private sector organizations.

## 2.1 Methodology

There were four broad sections in the survey of best practices in ERM:

- *Records Management Programs:* This section of the survey collected information on the nature of records management programs, the organizational structure in place that supports ERM programs, and the degree of top-management involvement in ERM programs.
- *Paper Records:* This portion of the survey identified which media are used for paper records and the extent to which organizations are transitioning from paper to electronic records.
- *E-mail Records:* This section seeks to elicit information on how much importance is associated with the idea of an e-mail as a record and the necessary steps taken to ensure that e-mails are adequately saved for record-keeping purposes.
- *Electronic Records:* This section gauged the adoption and proliferation of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) enterprise document management systems and the factors weighed when deciding whether to implement such a system, and the outlook of implementation of such a system in the organization.

The final version of the survey consisted of a written questionnaire of 31 questions, 25 of which were multiple choice and six of which required a prose response. In addition, participants had the option of providing more information if they wished to elaborate on any of their answers. The final version of the survey questionnaire also included an introduction, outlining the purpose and scope of the survey.

## 2.2 Conduct of the Survey

The survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey.com, a web-based survey tool. The survey was sent to individuals who are conversant in electronic records management, either by information obtained through contacts through the Center for Information Policy at the University of Maryland or by virtue of being associated with records/information management organizations such as AIIM (The Association for Information and Image Management), ARMA (Association of Records Managers and Administrators), and direct e-mails to federal, state, and private sector records managers and staff members.

Because the survey was sent to association list servers, it was impossible to calculate the response rate (number of responses received compared to the number of surveys sent). Recipients had access to the survey for 30 days, during which there were 119 responses.

## 3.0 Survey Results

### 3.1 Organization Description

**This section allowed for analysis and understanding of the participants responses based on the organizations they work for, the positions they hold, and their involvement with ERM within their offices. The responses gathered in this section enabled us to better understand the results and assign responses throughout the survey to specific types of organizations.**

*Question 1: For what type of organization do you work?*

There were 119 responses to this question. Thirty-three percent worked for a state government, 26% for profit companies, 19% for non-profit companies, 18% for federal government, and 4% worked for a state government.

*Question 2: How many employees are in your entire organization?*

Of the 119 respondents, 17% work in organizations with between one and 50 employees, 26% answered that their organization has 51 to 250 employees, 13% answered that their organization has between 251 and 1,000 employees, and 44% work with over 1000 employees.

Of the respondents who work in records management organizations, 51% work with over 1000 employees, while just 27% of the respondents who work in non-records management organizations work with over 1000 employees.

*Question 3: Please describe your duties in your organization. Check all that apply.*

Almost two-thirds (65.5%) of the participants indicated that they are responsible for records management. Additionally, 18.5% are involved in IT, 17.6% are managers, 16% function as administrative support, 7.6% identified themselves as program staff, and 31.9% indicated that they have other duties not offered as answers to the questions. Of the 38 respondents in this last group, 52% have archiving duties.

The numbers for employees involved in records management seems especially influenced by the size of the organization. The percentage of participants with this duty increases as the size of the organization increases. Forty-five percent of survey participants working in organization of fewer than 50 people work as records managers; fifty-five percent of participants working with 51 to 250 people are involved in records management. The number jumps to 75% when people working in organizations of 251 to 1000 are asked if their duties include records management and goes up again to 77% for the participants in organizations of over 1000.

## **Commentary on Results**

This portion of the survey serves to gain an insight of who the survey respondents are. The bulk of the participants work for a state government and in organizations with over 1000 employees, but they are not the majority. However, the majority of the respondents have duties that are directly related to records management.

### **3.2 Agency/Office Records Management Program**

This portion explores the current state of records management programs within the organization: how those records management programs are enforced, and how significant they are to the overall goals of the organization.

#### ***Question 4: Please describe the records management program in your office.***

The majority of the respondents, 82%, know that there were written records management policies in their office. However, when analyzed by size and type of organization, this number shows to be more complex. One-hundred percent of respondents working for local government reported having a written policy, but the same applies to only 67% in non-profit organizations. While 93% of organizations of 251 to 1000 have written policies, only 53% of organizations with less than 50 employees have such policies.

Sixty-one percent of total respondents indicated that their policies addressed electronic records. However, the percentage varies significantly depending on the size of the organization in which the respondent works. Seventy-one percent of respondents in organizations of 51 to 250 knew their written policies address electronic records while only 41% of respondents in organizations of less than 50 knew this about their policies.

Forty-six percent of non-records management respondents knew that their records management program complied with ISO 15489, but only 22% of records management respondents knew this about their program. Interestingly, only 25% of non-records management respondents did not know whether their program complied, while 31% of records management respondents did not know.

Type of organization was a factor in the differing responses on if program workers receive scheduled training with respect to their responsibilities for records management. Fifty-two percent of respondents working in for-profit organizations reported that workers do receive scheduled training. From there, the numbers went down: 47% of federal workers, 41% of state government respondents, 28% of non-profit respondents, and 25% of local government respondents reported that program workers received scheduled training regarding records management responsibilities.

Sixty-three percent of non-records management respondents reported that the records management staff includes an IT expert, while 41% of records management respondents indicated this. Fifty-nine percent of non-records management respondents indicated having a

formal system for records hold orders relative to claims or litigation, while 44% of records management respondents reported this.

Whether electronic records are included in formal system for records hold orders relative to claims or litigation varied seemed to vary depending of type of organization. None of the respondents working in local government reported that electronic records are included in the system and yet almost half (48%) of for-profit respondents indicated the inclusion. Additionally, 39% of records management respondents reported the inclusion of electronic records while 59% of non-records management respondents gave this answer.

Fifty-four percent of respondents have a disaster recovery plan for vital records. Fifty-seven percent of respondents working in records management indicated this, whereas 74% of non-records management respondents gave this reply.

Eighty percent of the total respondents indicated that existence of disposition and retention schedules. However, only 47% of respondents in organizations of fewer than 50 employees gave this answer. Respondents in the other three size categories were far more likely: 88% for 51 to 250, 86% for 251 to 1000, and 88% for over 1000. The situation was similar when we asked if records are transferred to storage facilities for inactive storage. While positive answers to this question were given by 83% to 93% of the three higher organizational size categories, only 53% of respondents in organizations of fewer than 50 said that records are transferred.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents working with 51 to 250 employees answered that permanent records are identified and preserved or transferred to an archive. But only 47% of respondents working with fewer than 50 gave this answer.

***Question 5: What accountability and enforcement mechanisms are in place for records management?***

Most responses (53%) gathered for this question illustrated that in the future, the records manager will be conducting scheduled evaluations of program workers' compliance with records management policies and procedures.

Eighty-one percent responded that program workers are not given a certificate or any other form of rewards when they receive an excellent evaluation.

***Question 6: Please describe the degree to which the program is linked with the overall goals of the organization.***

Sixty-four percent of the answers indicated that the records management program is included in the annual budget of most offices. Despite this, 75% indicated that the records manager is not a high-ranked official. These responses seemed to depend on the size of the organization, however. While 86% of respondents in organizations of 251 to 1000 indicated that the records manager is not a high-ranked official, 59% of those in organizations of 51 to 250 gave this answer.

Sixty-four percent said that the records manager is not part of the IT development and 59% of the participants answered that there was no link between the records management program and the overall goals of the organization.

### **Commentary on Results**

This section of the survey proved to be quite alarming considering the majority of the responses received indicate that companies do not seem to find electronic records management as important as other activities. Important policies such as ISO 15489 standards are unknown to some and records managers are still not ranked as high-ranking officials within the company. Although the first question in this section verifies that electronic records management is part of the daily activities in the office and that policies and other preservation models are in place, there seems to be a lack of understanding about importance of records management where most of the participants work.

### **3.3 Maintenance of Paper and Electronic Records**

**This section serves to understand how records are maintained. This includes how (in what format) and where they are stored.**

*Question 7: How are records maintained (includes word-processing documents, e-mail, spreadsheets, databases, etc)?*

Out of 96 respondents, 8% maintain no electronic records. The smaller the organization, the more likely the organization is to maintain records solely in paper format. However, the larger the organization, the more likely it is to maintain some paper and some electronic records. The percentages ranged from 71% to 98%. Just one percent of respondents store records exclusively in electronic format.

*Question 8: Where are records filed?*

Eighty-three percent of respondents use central filing cabinets and 84% use individual employees' filing cabinets. Sixty-six percent use of individual employees' hard drives.

Respondents working with fewer than 50 employees were less likely to use shared drives than the respondents working with more people were.

Twelve percent of respondents working with fewer than 50 people, 8% of those working with 51 to 250 people, 29% of those working with 251 to 1000 people, and 37% of those working with more than 1000 others used task management systems

Thirty-seven percent of respondents used electronic recordkeeping systems and 44% used electronic document management systems. These numbers differ when looked at by size of the respondents' organizations. The larger organizations are more likely to use electronic recordkeeping systems and/or electronic document management systems. While only 18% of

respondents in organizations of fewer than 50 use either of these, 51% of organizations of more than 1000 used an electronic recordkeeping system and 56% used an electronic document management system.

### **Commentary on Results**

This section provides information about the maintenance of records. Most organizations use paper and electronic formats to store their records. Many respondents did not report the use of ERK systems or Electronic Documents Management Systems to file records. The most common ways to file records proved to be the use of central and individual filing cabinets.

#### **3.3.1 Paper Records**

In this section, the participants would provide the information about whether paper records are copied to any media other than paper.

*Question 9: Are paper records copied to another medium (digital, microform, etc.)?*

The majority of the participants, 63.5%, answered that paper records are copied to other media some of the time. The likelihood that paper records were never copied to another medium increased with size of organization.

### **Commentary on Results**

Based on the survey responses collected for this section, organizations seem to be selective when copying paper records to other media. Records kept solely in paper format are more vulnerable to accidents and getting lost.

#### **3.3.1.1 Media Used for Storing Paper Records**

In this part of the survey, the participants shared the means used to copy paper records. This section would allow an understanding of the various ways used to retain and protect paper records.

*Question 10: What are the media used to copy the paper records?*

*Question 11: Does your office retain the paper originals?*

The number of respondents that participated in this section was very low thus quite insignificant to the analysis of the survey. Only 8 out of 119 participants answered questions 10 and 11.

### **Commentary on Results**

The questions in this section followed a specific logic and sequence of questions, which would qualify only those respondents who answered affirmatively to Question 9. We cannot draw valid conclusions from just eight responses.

### **3.3.2 Electronic Records**

This section is to provide the information about electronic records and whether those records are copied to any other media.

#### ***Question 12: Are electronic records copied to another medium?***

The majority of the participants, 69%, answered that electronic records are copied to other media some of the time. Fifteen percent answered affirmatively to the use of another other media.

#### **Commentary on Results**

The results of this section show that a large percentage of the respondents copy electronic records to another medium some of the time. This illustrates that organizations are slowly recognizing the importance of having duplicate records to prevent the dangers of losing important data.

#### **3.3.2.1 Media used for Storing Electronic Records**

**This section provides information about the specific media used by various organizations to duplicate their electronic records.**

#### ***Question 13: What are the media used to copy the Electronic Records?***

#### ***Question 14: Does your office retain the Electronic originals?***

The number of respondents that participated in this section was very low. Only 13 out of 119 participants answered question 13 and 17 answered Question 14. Valid conclusions cannot be drawn.

#### **Commentary on Results**

The questions in this section followed a specific logic and sequence of questions, which would qualify only those respondents who answered affirmatively to Question 12. Thirteen responses is not enough from which a valid conclusion can be drawn.

### **3.3.3 Filing, Access and Deletion**

**The questions in this section target those employees who file records.**

#### ***Question 15: For records in a central file, who files the records?***

For paper records, 75% of the respondents mentioned that the creator is responsible for filing records in the central file. Ninety-three percent said it is the records manager's responsibility and 94% answered that the administrative assistant has the duty.

As for electronic records, 88% of the respondents said that the creator of the record is the one to file it to the central file. Sixty-four percent answered that it is the records manager's responsibility, while 61% said it is the administrative assistant's job.

***Question 16: For records maintained in ELECTRONIC format in a central file, who has access to the system?***

The percentage of the respondents that answered that all employees have access varied significantly depending on size of organization. In organizations of one to 50 people, 73% answered all employees have access. Thirty-nine percent of respondents in organizations of 51 to 250 gave this answer as well as 36% of respondents in organizations of 251 to 1000 employees. In organizations of more than 1000, 41% of respondents answered that all employees have access to the records stored electronically in a central file.

There was also variation in answers depending on type of organization. Sixty-nine percent of respondents in federal organizations reported all employees have access to records stored electronically in a central file. Forty-three percent of respondents in state organizations answered that all employees have access while just 0.5% of respondents in local organizations gave this answer. Of the respondents working for non-profit organizations, 29% said all employees have access while 46% of for-profit respondents gave this answer.

Additionally, 23% of all participants indicated the records manager had access to these records. Twenty-two percent reported that top management officials had access and 51% listed other people that had access to the electronic central file. Of those who listed others, most indicated that access is granted based on job requirements.

***Question 17: An electronic record is considered "destroyed" when the following has occurred...***

Forty-six percent of the respondents indicated that a record is considered destroyed when the "delete" button is pushed and 48% answered that when media has been overwritten, the record is considered "destroyed." When media has been physically destroyed, 55% indicated the record is "destroyed." Fifty-five percent also answered the record has been "destroyed" when backups have been overwritten. Eighteen percent say this has happened when audit log has been checked and all copies have been destroyed.

The absence of a formal policy that defines the destruction of a record was the most common response among the 15% of respondents who selected "other" as an answer to this question.

## **Commentary on Results**

The responses in this section about electronic recordkeeping systems indicate that there are no concrete roles played by individuals who maintain and have access to records in the central files. This section also illuminated the ambiguity of the definition of the term "destroyed record."

### **3.3.4 E-mail Consideration**

This section aims to determine if an e-mail is considered an official record. The questions in this section dig deeper to find out which policies define an e-mail as a record and if the policy includes transitory e-mails. The questions also cover the format and location of e-mail records.

#### ***Question 18: Does your organization consider e-mails as records?***

Consideration of e-mails as records varies considerably depending on the size of the organization. Eighty-one percent of organizations of one to 50 represented think of e-mails to be records; similarly, 83% of organizations of 51-250 consider e-mails records. However, only 75% of organizations with 251 to 1000 employees consider e-mails to be records. The percentage jumps up to 97% with organizations of over 1000.

#### **Commentary on Results**

Most of the respondents confirmed that their organization accepts e-mail as a form of record. This section leads to other questions that will allow for a more thorough understanding of the policies in place to determine which e-mails are records and how those records are saved and deleted.

#### **3.3.4.1 Management of E-mail Records**

The question in this section tries to learn more about e-mail record policies.

#### ***Question 19: Please describe the policy that determines which e-mails are records***

Sixty percent indicated e-mail record status is determined on a case-by-case basis and 46% answered that official agency or organizational policy dictates which e-mail messages are records. Twenty-one percent indicated that the decision is made in some other manner. Some of the most common individual descriptions of these methods were “all public records law,” “corporate policy,” and “all e-mails are records and their retention is determined by content and value.” One participant stated that there was “no e-mail policy in place within his/her organization.”

#### **Commentary on Results**

The answers collected for the questions in this section show that most organizations consider the content of e-mails when deciding whether an e-mail is a record or not. Laws and organizational and corporate policies are also in place to enable employees to make a distinction between e-mails that are records and e-mails that are not.

#### **3.3.4.2 Management of Transitory E-mails**

This section concentrates specifically on transitory e-mails and their conservation policy.

***Question 20: Does official office policy state that transitory e-mails do not have to be saved?***

Of the 23 respondents to this question, 65% answered that, according to official office policy, transitory e-mails do not have to be saved. Thirty-five percent answered that transitory e-mails need to be saved.

### **Commentary on Results**

The question in this section not answered by over 80% of the participants. Using the responses collected, the conclusion can be made that most policies states that transitory e-mails do not have to be saved.

### **3.3.4.3 E-mail Records**

This section of the survey is meant to collect information about what organizations do with their e-mails after they have been designated the status of record.

***Question 21: In what format do you maintain e-mails?***

Eight-seven percent of participants indicated that they maintain e-mail records electronically and 73% maintain e-mail records in paper format. E-mails are maintained in paper by 84% of records management respondents and 68% of non-records management respondents.

***Question 22: Where are they kept?***

This question was an open-ended question that allowed respondents the opportunity to present a short description about where their e-mail records are stored. Many answers mentioned that their offices stored electronic copies in specific shared files and printed copies in physical files. Others confirmed that individual senders and receivers keep e-mails. Many participants mentioned the use of e-mail and MS Exchange servers, as well as the use of different ERK systems.

***Question 23: In actual practice, how often are e-mails deleted?***

Twenty-three percent of respondents answered that employees deleted e-mails because of space limitations. Nineteen percent of the respondents did not know how often the e-mails were deleted and 11% answered that e-mails were deleted automatically after a certain period of time, which ranged from 60 days to 365 days. Others also mentioned that the decision to delete a record depended on the importance of the e-mail to the receiver.

### **Commentary on Results**

This section shows that most e-mail is maintained in both paper and electronic formats. Companies use different ways to store e-mail files. Paper records are stored in file cabinets;

electronic records are stored in specific folders using electronic records management systems, such as ECM, EDMS, and EREDMS, as well as individual drives and e-mail servers. E-mails seem to be deleted by employees once used, automatically deleted based on a retention schedule, or sometimes saved depending on their content.

### **3.4 The Future of Recordkeeping Systems (ERK)**

The question means to recognize whether organizations are considering ERK systems. In addition, this section helps distinguishing between organizations that have already implemented an ERK system from those that have not.

#### ***Question 24: Has your office implemented an Electronic Record Keeping System (ERK)?***

Sixty-six percent of respondents report that their offices have not implemented an ERK system, while 34% are currently working with an ERK system. As with many questions in this section, twenty-six respondents skipped this question.

#### **Commentary on results**

This section of the survey divides the participants into two categories: those who are currently working and familiar with an ERK system and those who have not yet had the opportunity to work with such a system.

#### **3.4.1 If Your Office has NOT Implemented an ERK**

The questions in this section targets the 65.6% of those respondents whose offices have not implemented an ERK system.

#### ***Question 25: If the office has not implemented an electronic record keeping system for any or all of their files, what is the main reason why they have not?***

When the responses are analyzed, they seem to vary based on size of organization. Forty-six percent of respondents in organizations of one to 50 and in those of 51 to 250 cited lack of financial resources as the reason for not implementing an ERK. Seventy-one percent of respondents in organizations of 251 to 1000 and 65% of those in organization of more than 1000 also gave this response.

Twenty-three percent of respondents in organizations of one to 50 answered that their offices have not implemented an ERK due to lack of expertise. This answer was also given by 31% of respondents in organization of 51 to 250, 43% of those in organizations of 251 to 1000, and 42% of those in organization of more than 1000.

Fifty-four percent of respondents in organizations of one to 50 and in those of 51 to 250 said that the use of an ERK was deemed unnecessary for day-to-day operations. Twenty-nine

percent of respondents in organizations of 251 to 1000 and 19% of respondents in organizations of over 1000 also gave this answer.

The remaining 27.1% responses differed since each respondent gave a specific reason why an ERK system has not been implemented. Some of the reasons given are the following:

- “use of an old and limited record keeping system”
- “implementation of an ERK is in the agency’s future plans”
- “lack of management support”
- “staff is not ready for such an implementation”
- “office is in the process of implementing an ERK system”
- “still waiting for other affiliated agencies to implement the system in order to be able to do the same” and
- “lack of trained staff.”

***Question 26: What types of barriers would you anticipate within your office when implementing an ERK system?***

Only 40 responses were collected, while the other 21 participants opted to skip this open-ended question.

The most common likely barrier cited was “the financial costs, training costs and all other resources” needed to implement an ERK system. Among the other obstacles mentioned were the following:

- resistance to change”
- “the problems associated with the integration with other systems”
- “training issues”
- “the understanding of the value of ERK systems” and
- “the policies in place.”

***Question 27: What types of advantages would you anticipate within your office when implementing an ERK system?***

Thirty-five out of 61 participants eligible to participate in this section responded to this open-ended question. The most common responses were “a better control of records” and “a better sharing and understanding of information.” Other responses included the following:

- “the speed of retrieval”
- “accuracy of retention and compliance with disposition”
- “reducing the amount of files stored on server”
- “reducing maintenance issues”
- “reducing legal risks” and
- “reducing the risk of losing important data.”

***Question 28: Is the office planning to implement an ERK system for any or all of their files in the near future?***

The responses to this question seemed to depend on if the respondent was a records manager or not. Forty-six percent of records managers reported that their offices were planning to implement an ERK system in the near future, while just 17% of non-records managers gave this answer. Thirty percent of records manager answered that their officers were not planning this change, while 44% of non-records managers replied this way. Twenty-four percent of records managers did not know if their offices were planning to implement an ERK system, whereas 39% of non-records manager did not know.

***Question 29: What systems/vendors is your office considering?***

An overwhelming number of participants opted not to answer this question. TRIM was the system/vendor most frequently named by the 21 participants who provided answers to the question. Responses also cited Hummingbird, Documentum, and Imanage. Over half of the respondents were unaware of the systems/vendors that their office was considering.

**Commentary on results**

This section of the survey targeted participants who have not had the opportunity to work with an ERK system. Sixty-one participants responded that their office has not implemented an ERK system in the previous section. Most of those participants answered the first few questions and skipped the last ones. An apparent trend in the survey is that participants tended to skip most open-ended questions. The results of this section indicate that the most common problem with the implementation of an ERK system is the costs associated with such an implementation and the training needed to perform better with an ERK system. This section also implies that participants believe that while using an ERK system would help their office improve the sharing and controlling of information, such systems are not implemented.

**3.4.2 Electronic Record Keeping Already Implemented**

The questions in this section target the 34% of those participants whose offices have already implemented an ERK system. This section means to recognize the main systems that are used and to understand what problems the participants have encountered while using those systems/vendors.

***Question 30: For records that are maintained and filed electronically:***

- a. What is the electronic system (product name) that is being used?***
- b. Why did the office choose this system?***

Out of the 32 participants who answered that their offices have implemented an ERK system, 24 of them answered the first part of this open-ended question. The most common answers were Hummingbird, TRIM, FileNet, Documentum and in-house systems or self-developed systems. One respondent mentioned eNALA, a government system.

The same number of participants answered the second part of the question. The most prominent responses were the following:

- “the ease of use of the system”

- “the cost”
- “specific features”
- “customer support” and
- “the choice of implementing a specific system was based on the results of an analysis” that their office conducted.

***Question 31: If the office has implemented an electronic record keeping system for any or all of their files, what problems did the office encounter?***

Only 18 participants opted to answer this final open-ended question. The most common responses were the following:

- “the cost and resource availability”
- “training and change in work habits”
- “implementation and schedule overruns”
- “difficulty extracting data”
- “resistance to change” and
- “the need to consolidate existing systems and processes.”

### **Commentary on results**

In this last section of the survey, responses were collected from those participants who are currently working with an ERK system. Out of the 32 participants who confirmed using an ERK system, 24 or fewer responded to each question in this section. Most responses were similar. With few exceptions, nearly every ERK system used was Hummingbird, TRIM, or Documentum. The reasons for choosing those systems were mainly financial as well as the ease of use of certain systems. The number of responses decreased in the second question, which may be attributed to lack of problems encountered with the systems. Otherwise, the most common problems described were lack of financial resources and training.

## 4.0 Conclusion

This survey gathered information about current best practices in the public and private sectors for e-mail and desktop ERM. Issues addressed include the following: Agency/Office Records Management Program, Maintenance of paper and electronic records, Electronic Recordkeeping Systems, especially for the Management of E-mail Records, and Future of Records Management. The results of the questionnaire were simultaneously expected and surprising.

First, records management seems to be a critical activity within every organization. Yet the importance given to ERK systems and records management in general seems to contradict that belief as is evidenced in the lack of high-level official in charge of records management.

Second, most organizations are aware of and have developed general policies to ensure that e-mails are treated as records. Unfortunately, this awareness and these policies have not been converted into practical operational documents that allow individuals to understand when and how to determine when an e-mail should be classified as a record, leaving classification decisions to be made on *ad hoc* basis.

In addition, most records appear to be stored in both electronic and paper formats. While the majority of the participants in this survey are currently not working with ERK systems, most suggested ways allow implementation of such a system in recognition of the system's importance to the organization. The cost to implement an ERK system seems to be the recurring reason for not implementing such system. Again, this points to the lack of high-ranking leadership presence in records management to ensure that an adequate share of corporate resources are allocated to records management.

In conclusion, the highlights of the survey results point to a fascinating pattern in records management. There is high recognition amongst records management professionals of the importance of considering e-mails as records. In addition, organizations have been slow to implement ERKs and the adoption of best practices to ensure the adequate storage and implementation of electronic records. This is because ERM is still relegated to the staff and administrative levels of most organizations, as evidenced in the lack of high-ranking records management officials, the lack of linkage of records management to overall goals of organizations, and the lack of financial resources as a hindrance to implementing ERKs.

# **APPENDIX F**

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# **APPENDIX G**

*Glossary*

## Glossary

**Corporate file** – A file is considered “corporate” when it is available to all staff members in an office or offices who need it. Corporate files in paper format are maintained in a physical location accessible to relevant staff. Corporate files in electronic format are maintained on a computer server accessible to relevant staff.

**Disposition Schedule** - A document that identifies and describes an organization's records, usually at the series level, provides instructions for the disposition of records throughout their lifecycle. Also called a **disposal schedule, records schedule, records retention schedule,** and **transfer schedule**. Retention schedules may also include instructions for the disposition of documents and other materials that are not official records.

**Document Management System** – Tracks and stores documents. The term is used to distinguish among imaging and records management systems that specialize in paper capture and records respectively. Document management systems commonly provide check-in, check-out, storage and retrieval of electronic documents. Physical paper document management systems store a scanned image of a document, and in some systems, text about the document. Electronic document management systems (EDMS) manage electronic records produced by individuals using their desktop computers (e.g., word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, projects, e-mail). Stores information about the records and the actual physical records and typically includes a workflow model for certifying and electronically signing documents. EDMS provides only primitive records retention capabilities.

**DoD 5015.2 Certified** – a records management application certified by the JITC because it meets the mandatory baseline functional requirements set forth by the Department of Defense and endorsed by NARA.

**Electronic Record** - any information that is recorded in a form that only a computer can process and that satisfies the definition a record.

**Electronic Recordkeeping System/Application [ERKS]** – electronic records management software and associated hardware that has the ability to collect, organize, and categorize *born-digital* (a document originally created in electronic format) electronic records to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, and disposition. In practice, ERKS also contain scanned (digitalized) documents as well as born-digital documents. For the purposes of this study, we have used ERKS as being synonymous with **Records Management Application [RMA]**. DOD 5015.2-STD describes the required functionalities for a RMA. We do not apply the term ERKS to such electronic records keeping approaches as (a) folders conforming to a file plan on a shared drive; or (b) a DMA which references approved dispositions. As used in this report, an ERKS must comply with, DOD 5015-2-STD, but does not need to be certified.

**Federal Manager’s Financial Accountability Act (FMFIA)** - Requires agency heads to submit annually, an Integrity Act Report providing reasonable assurance that the Agency’s policies, procedures and guidance are adequate to support the achievement of the agency’s intended mission, goals and objectives.

**File Plan** - A classification scheme describing different types of files maintained in an office, how they are identified, where they should be stored, how they should be indexed for retrieval, and a reference to the approved disposition for each file.

**Flexible Scheduling** – Provides for concrete disposition instructions that may be applied to groupings of information and/or categories of temporary records (in other words, instructions for agencies to develop schedules for disposable program records at as high a level of aggregation as would meet their business needs). Flexibility is in defining record groupings. Flexible scheduling relates to the **Big Bucket** approach, which refers to the application of appraisal criteria to multiple, similar, or related groupings of information across one or multiple agencies to establish a uniform retention period.

**Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA, or “The Results Act”), P.L. 103-62 - Ties performance to the budget** and covers everything not just IT...the GPRA was intended to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of government programs by requiring agencies to focus on results rather than traditional concerns such as staffing and activity levels. Under the GRA, agencies must set goals, measure performance, and report on their accomplishments...specifically required are Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans and Annual Program Performance Reports. In doing so, agencies need to be able to articulate their mission, identify goals, identify activities that will achieve those goals, identify performance measures, and identify how that measurement information will be used to make improvements.

**ISO 15489** - An international standard that established principles to ensure that adequate records are created, captured, and managed, and guidelines for their implementation.

**Program Worker** – A staff member carrying out the office’s mission. This term excludes administrative support personnel such as Human Resources or Budget and also excludes Records Managers and Information Technology specialists.

**Record** - All books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any public or private institution in pursuance of its legal obligations or in connection with the transaction of its proper business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that institution or its legitimate successor as evidence its organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities or because of the informational value of the data in them.

**Recordkeeping Copy** – The copy, regardless of media or format, that has been officially designated as the official record copy.

**Records Hold Order** – An order issued by a court or administrative body to suspend the normal disposition of records related to pending litigation or administrative investigation. The hold order may also be issued by internal counsel when they become aware of potential litigation or investigations that are likely to result in an official hold order.

**Records Liaison** – A staff member who organizes and maintains the office’s records.

**Shared Drive** – A networked storage device that can be accessed by a designated group or class of employees.

**Targeted Assistance** – Means that NARA works together with individual agencies to solve specific records management problems. Since 1999, NARA has initiated 344 projects, completed 238 projects, and assisted 88 unique agencies. Through these partnerships, they have inventoried and scheduled at-risk records, trained agency personnel in records management, and assisted in the development of records management systems.

**Task Management System** – Software designed to help agency's break down, assign, and monitor specific tasks that need to be completed within a set timeframe. The system may alert personnel when new tasks are assigned to them, give real-time reports on status, or track trends and completion dates.

**Web Content Schedule** - In January 2005, NARA issued guidance on managing web records. NARA recommends that agencies conduct a risk analysis in order to establish appropriate levels of records management controls over web sites. Based on this analysis, agencies should develop records schedules for web content records that document the information on the site itself. A web schedule should also include web site management and operations records, which provide the site's context and structure.